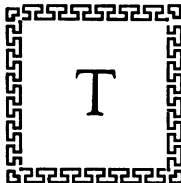


ADDRESS OF THE RETIRING PRESIDENT*

ARTHUR F. CHACE

Two years ago when I assumed the Presidency of The New York Academy of Medicine, I pledged myself to accept the challenge of the changing world and to endeavor to lead the Academy to ever greater heights of achievement in spite of the difficulties along the path, in a world torn by a devastating war. The magnitude of the problem served as a stimulus to our best effort, for as Browning so truly said—

“But a man’s reach should exceed his grasp

Or what’s a heaven for.”

Tonight I shall speak of the past two years in terms of my stewardship and give you a brief picture of the progress made.

The revolutionary forces in society are demanding adjustment of the public health agencies to the new order, with increasing intensity and the Academy is meeting these demands with ever-widening spheres of influence and constructive coöperation throughout its many departments.

In spite of the insufficient stacks, the impossibility of procuring foreign periodicals and the difficulty in maintaining personnel, the Library has carried on with valiant and unbroken efficiency.

In the past two years the Committee on Public Health Relations has maintained its tradition. The most important problems arising out of the war to which the Committee has given especial attention are: The progress of the treatment in Veterans’ Tuberculosis Hospitals; the taking part in the national inquiry into physical fitness, the need for which was shown by the high rates of rejection among the young men called for induction into the armed forces; the standardization of the training of WACS, so as to qualify them to meet the requirements of the A.M.A. for various types of technician after their return to civil life. Among the long list of its activities the constructive recommendations improving the Workmen’s Compensation System in the State, the publication of Standards on convalescent care and rehabilitation and the book on

* Delivered at the Annual Meeting of The New York Academy of Medicine, January 4, 1945.

Preventive Medicine, are most noteworthy.

At the request of the Council, the Committee on Medical Education assumed charge of the installation of a permanent drug exhibit which serves two purposes: the medical education of the physician in the newer pharmaceuticals and recognition of the contribution in research and accomplishment by the great pharmaceutical houses of this country. More than 2,000 physicians viewed the exhibit during the Fortnight period and since then the daily attendance has averaged 62 persons. The Committee has developed means to meet the expected post-war demand for post-graduate medical courses. It is preparing for an extension of post-graduate courses in independent hospitals and is giving every assistance to physicians seeking such studies. The Committee has maintained the high standards of its scientific programs with its Stated Meetings of the Academy, the Friday Afternoon Lectures, the Research Meetings and the Seventeenth Graduate Fortnight.

In all the activities of the Committee on Information there is a common denominator which is the Academy's leadership and the Academy's service to those who are concerned with the education of the public in matters of health. The Committee's projected Health Education Demonstration will have far reaching effect in guiding the in-service training of Health Educators. Educators are evincing ever greater interest in the Lectures to the Laity. In the past two years the publication of the two volumes of the March of Medicine has been enthusiastically received, as has the publication of the two volumes of the transactions of the Academy's Annual Health Education Conference. The Committee has been called upon to review and help compose a very substantial number of manuscripts, which manuscripts, dealing with important health items, are published in magazines whose individual circulation runs into the millions. The Academy, in this way, is exercising an influence which is nationwide and of major significance.

In the early part of 1943 the Committee on Medicine and the Changing Order was initiated. During the past two years it has gathered a vast amount of material and has thoroughly explored the field of social change. It has gained the support of a very substantial number of citizens from every walk of life and in every major profession. One of the twelve basic monographs which have grown out of these studies has already been published. The others are in the process of preparation. The publication of the monographs, essays and final reports will, we hope,

constitute a worthy contribution to the solution of the problem of the Changing Order.

The improvement of the Academy's economic situation during the last four years has been a gratifying achievement which made possible an urgently necessary increase in the services of the Academy. In our effort to be of service to the official and voluntary health organizations we have loaned members of our executive force to the New York Tuberculosis Association, the Welfare Council, the Navy League and the Women's Army Corps. We are happy to announce that from three sources, financial support for traveling expenses and honoraria has been obtained. The Fortnight has been permanently endowed by the generosity of Mr. R. Thornton Wilson. The Academy has aided in the recruitment and training of practical nurses. The By-Laws have been amended for the strengthening and defining of the position of the Academy with regard to medical ethics.

The pattern of man's life falls into three domains: One in which he earns his livelihood; another in which he develops cultural pursuits and the third in which he labors without thought of reward in the service of mankind. The greatness of a nation can be measured by the amount of time and effort which its citizenry devotes to such a service.

During the past two years our Fellows, in addition to their contribution to the war effort, have given more freely of their time and energy to public health, educational and socio-economic interest, not alone in this community but in ever widening circles, which reach out to the state and country as a whole. With so many of our Fellows on active war service, it is significant that those who are carrying on the work at home are serving in greater numbers than ever before in committee work. This is forcibly brought to our notice in the Director's report, which shows that 389 Academy Fellows have served in over 203 meetings. Not alone has the routine work of the committees and sections been carried forward at an increased tempo, but in the new fields of endeavor which have been initiated, all the meetings have been fully attended.

It is a source of deepest gratification to me that in the years of my stewardship I should have received unfailing support and enthusiastic coöperation from every member of the Academy family. It has been a signal honor and privilege to work with the unselfish men and women in this organization which stands for all that is best in a noble profession.

The achievements which have been enumerated have been made possible through the wisdom and statesmanship of our Director, Doctor Herbert B. Wilcox. It has been a personal tribute to his wise administration, that our splendid staff has given so unstintingly of its assistance. Through his vision the Academy has steadily grown in prestige. It is fortunate, indeed, to have a man of such administrative capacity together with such kindness, human understanding and unprejudiced judgment.

The Academy is particularly fortunate in having as our next President, one of its Fellows who represents the highest traditions of the profession, who has had a wide experience as a clinician, diagnostician and educator and who is both a scholar and humanitarian. In following Doctor William Worthington Herrick's leadership in the years to come, I am sure that the Fellowship of the Academy will see it rise to even fuller achievement in the service of humanity.